

# Adoptive & Foster Parent Association of Georgia

46th Annual Education Conference

February 22-24, 2019

## Putting the Pieces Together



**Jekyll Island Convention Center**

75 North Beach View Drive

Jekyll Island, Georgia 31527

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**



**Dear AFPAG Members,**

**On behalf of the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Education Conference.**

**Foster care requires a very high calling, and I hope this conference provides you the opportunity to visit with friends, make new acquaintances, and share your experiences. May you find encouragement as you listen to speakers, participate in the general sessions, and interact with other foster, adoptive, and relative parents and DFCS staff from around the great state of Georgia.**

**If you have the opportunity, I hope you will take time to enjoy Jekyll Island and everything it has to offer.**

**As I make my exit as president of the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia, I am reminded of this quote from Maya Angelou, "I have found that among its benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver." This quote could not ring truer for me. These past six years on the board have been nothing short of fulfilling. When I became president, it was not clear what impact I would have on the association. I went with the intention to not only make a difference but to become a better community member by giving in any way I could; all the while further advancing the mission of AFPAG.**

**Through guidance and others' experiences and leadership, I was able to understand that for AFPAG to be truly successful, all parts of the association need to be mutually valuable, and we must all work together and be intentional in our actions to accomplish our mission. As I reflect on the past six years, what has become tremendously clear is that the spirit of collaboration with our partners; especially with Georgia Division of Family and Children Services; is stronger than ever. We have set the stage for a true partnership!! It has been GREAT serving as your president.**

**Best wishes for a great conference,  
Mr. Verdell Daniels – President  
Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia**

## HOTEL INFORMATION

You will need to make your own hotel reservations. **Tell them you are with the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG) Conference, February 22-24, 2019.**

All hotels reservations must be made by the cut-off date listed by the hotel below to ensure you get the conference rate.

**VILLAS BY THE SEA      PHONE 1-800-841-6262 CUT-OFF DATE JAN 22, 2019**

Mini-Villa/Studio	\$109.00
One Bedroom Villa	\$129.00
Two Bedroom Villa	\$164.00
Three Bedroom Villa	\$180.00

**HAMPTON INN AND SUITES      PHONE 1- 800-426-7866      CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 21, 2019**

Standard Room, Two Queen Beds or one King Bed	\$147.00
Suites	\$167.00

**DAYS INN AND SUITES      PHONE 1-912-635-9800      CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 22, 2019**

Island Side Room	\$110.00
Ocean Side Room	\$120.00

**HOLIDAY INN AND SUITES      PHONE 1-912-635-2211      CUT-OFF DATE JAN 26, 2019**

Island View	\$129.00
Ocean View	\$139.00
Oversize Ocean Front	\$149.00
Oceanfront Suites	\$199.00

**WESTIN HOTEL      PHONE 1-888-627-8316      CUT-OFF DATE Feb. 1, 2019**

Island View	\$158.00
Ocean View	\$178.00

**BEACHVIEW CLUB HOTEL      PHONE 1-912-635-2256      CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 22, 2019**

Standard Room 2 Queen Beeds	\$149.00
Beach View Club Suites 2 Double Beds Suites	\$199.00

**JEKYLL ISLAND CLUB HOTEL      PHONE 1-800-535-9547      CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 23, 2019**

Clubhouse or Traditional Rooms	\$139.00
One Bedroom Suites	\$179.00

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia  
2019 Annual Education Conference  
February 22-24, 2019  
Jekyll Island, Georgia

Thursday February 21, 2019

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	AFPAG Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Early Registration
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibit Set Up

Friday February 22, 2019

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration Open
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Opening Session
10:30 a.m. -10:45 a.m.	BREAK
10:45 a.m. -12:15 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session A
12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<b>LUNCH ON YOUR OWN</b>
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	General Session #1
3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	BREAK
3:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session B
4:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting

Saturday February 23, 2019

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration Open
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	General Session #2
9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	BREAK
9:45 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Breakout Workshop Session C
11:15 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	BREAK
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Awards Luncheon
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	BREAK
1:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session D
3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	BREAK
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	General Session #3

Sunday February 24, 2019

8:00 a.m. -- 8:45 a.m.	Non-Denominational Worship Service
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Closing Session
10:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	Closing Remarks and Grand Prize Drawing

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia 2019  
Conference Registration Jekyll Island Georgia

**PLEASE USE SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH PERSON REGISTERING**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Ph. \_\_\_\_\_ County. \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK ONE**

Adoptive Parent: ( ) 2. Foster Parent: ( ) 3. DFCS Staff: ( ) 4. Private Agency: ( ) 5. Other: ( )

**Friday Workshop Session (A)**

Workshop- 1<sup>st</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday Workshop Session (B)**

Workshop- 1<sup>st</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday Workshop Session (C)**

Workshop- 1<sup>st</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday Workshop Session (D)**

Workshop – 1<sup>st</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND ALL GENERAL SESSIONS,  
OPENING SESSION, CLOSING, AND AWARD LUNCHEON.**

Registration Fee: \$125.00 per participant: Only checks and money orders will be accepted

Registration cut-off date is February 1, 2019

On -site registration fee: \$ 175.00 No personal checks will be accepted.

Extra Awards Luncheon tickets are \$ 35. All return checks will be charged \$45.00. **NO REFUNDS  
WILL BE GIVEN AFTER FEB. 1, 2018.**

Make Check Payable to AFPAG Conference.

Mail Check to AFPAG Conference 101 Windsor Road, Savannah, Ga. 31419

**PLEASE DO NOT BRING CHILDREN INTO ANY WORKSHOPS  
OR CONFERENCE SESSIONS.**

## 2019 AFPAG Conference Information

Please choose two selections for each workshop session and record the workshop number in the order of preference for each workshop selected. Be sure to record your 1<sup>st</sup> choice and then your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice. Remember to register early for the best selection of workshops as classes are limited to size.

### EXAMPLE

Workshop: 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice A-6

Workshop: 1<sup>st</sup> Choice: A-1

### IF YOU ATTEND ALL THE FOLLOWING:

Opening session, general session, awards luncheon, closing session, and your assigned workshops, you will receive a total of 15 credit hours of training.

Registration includes: Registration fee, workshop materials, goodie bags, award luncheon ticket, and a one year's membership to AFPAG.

### ALL EXTRA TICKETS TO THE AWARDS LUNCHEON ARE \$35.00

This conference provides a great opportunity to learn and address issues such as childcare, new policy changes, and working in true partnership with those agencies that support us as we work to meet the needs of children in DFCS custody. The Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia will not provide any kind of childcare for any children accompanying you to this conference. Please contact your local DFCS case manager to assist you in arranging suitable respite care for your children or take advantage of Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards (RPPS).

### OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Arrive at your workshop early.
- Make sure you sign in, so you will get credit for the workshop.
- Please attend only the workshops that you registered for.
- Complete the workshop evaluation sheet and give it to the class monitor.
- Make sure you receive your workshop sticker at the end of the workshop.

NO CHILDREN WILL BE ALLOWED IN ANY CONFERENCE GENERAL, OPENING, CLOSING SESS

WORKSHOPS. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. PLEASE ASK YOUR DFCS CASE MANGER FOR RESPITE CARE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE: 912-920-8362 or 912-312-6941 OR 1-877-804-6610

# 2019 AFPAG Conference at a Glance

---

## Thursday February 21, 2019

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. AFPAG Board of Directors Meeting  
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Early Registration  
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Vendors & Exhibits Set Up

## Friday February 22, 2019

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration (pre-registered and on-site Registration)  
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Exhibits Open  
8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Opening Session: Verdell Daniels, AFPAG President  
DFCS Leadership Message: Tom Rawlings, Interim Director  
Keith Bostick, DFCS Deputy Director  
BREAK  
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

### 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

### Break out Workshops (A)

- A-1. Building Foundations for Successful Partnership Parenting
- A-2. ADHD - When Worlds Collide
- A-3. Early Detection of Developmental Delays and Disabilities
- A-4. Nuts and Bolts of Special Education
- A-5. A Healthy Family Makes a Strong Family
- A-6. The Path to Permanence and the Pursuit of the Best Interest of the Child
- A-7. Let's Talk Adoption
- A-8. How Need Deprivation Impacts Ongoing Behavior
- A-9. Georgia Foster Parent Bill of Rights

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. LUNCH ON YOUR OWN  
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. General Session # 1 Building and Strengthening Transracial Families in a Race-Conscious Society Presenter: Robert O'Connor  
3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. BREAK

### 3:15 to 4:45 p.m.

### Break out Workshops (B)

- B-1. National Foster Parents Code of Ethics and Advocacy to strengthen family Policies & Practices
- B-2. Our Work Their Rights: Supporting Youth Through the Student Disciplinary Process.
- B-3. The Importance of Maintain Sibling Connections
- B-4. Case Law Updates for Foster and Adoptive Children
- B-5. Post Adoption Services through Adoption Assistance
- B-6. Successful Strategies for Preparing Youth in Care for Employment
- B-7. Knowing Your Capacity: Finding Your Own Superpowers!
- B-8. Creative Conflict Resolution.
- B-9. It Takes Two to Make a Thing Go Right/Collaboration with Your Child's School

4:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. AFPAG Annual Business Meeting

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2019**

7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Registration on Site  
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Exhibits Open  
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. General Session # 2 The Right to be Heard in Court. Presenter: Jerry Bruce  
9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. BREAK

**9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Break outs Workshops (C)**

- C-1. Education Rights for Children in Foster Care
- C-2. Well Being Academy/ EPACP and WPAC Foster the Well Being of the Whole Child
- C-3. Complex Trauma Informed Approach to Children in Foster Care
- C-4. Diversity in Skin and Hair Care
- C-5. Developing Emotional Attachment
- C-6. Understanding Amerigroup 360
- C-7. Preventing Adoptions Disruptions: How to Prepare for and Cope with Trauma Issues and Your Adoptive Child
- C-8. Cultural Bias Awareness for Adoptive Families
- C-9. ADHD When Worlds Collide

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. BREAK  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. AFPAG's Awards Luncheon  
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. BREAK

**1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Break out Workshops (D)**

- D-1. Building Foundations for Successful Partnership Parenting
- D-2. National Foster Parent Association Code of Ethics/Advocacy to Strengthen Family Policies and Practices
- D-3. The Child Welfare System: The Pipeline to Human Trafficking
- D-4. The Path to Permanence and the Pursuit of the Best Interest of the Child
- D-6. Know Your Capacity/ Find Your Own Superpowers
- D-7. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- D-8. A Healthy Family Makes a Strong Family
- D-9. Early Detection of Developmental Delays and Disabilities

3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. BREAK  
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. General Session #3 - Kimberly Washington, An Adoption Mother's Journey

**Sunday February 24, 2019**

8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Non - Denominational Service  
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Closing Session..... Division of Family and Children Services Special  
Operation Team Presenters: Marva Reed, Shoney Lowery, Chad Mahan,  
Tomika Wadley, Jonathan Jackson, and Sam Doyle  
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Closing Remarks and Grand Prize Drawing



**PLEASE REMEMBER NO CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED IN ANY WORKSHOP OR GENERAL SESSIONS**

**2019 Adoptive Parent of the Year Application**

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES FOR**

**VERIFICATION**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**What makes this Adoptive Family/Parent the Best in Georgia? (Use a separate sheet of paper if needed)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Is the Nominee a member of any organization or civic club?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Nominee must be a member in good standing with AFPAG and their local DFCS. All applications must be received by February 1, 2019. The winner must attend the awards luncheon. Please mail your application to: AFPAG CONFERENCE: 101 Windsor Road Savannah Ga 31419**

**Foster Parent of the Year Application**

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

**References for Verification**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What makes this the best foster parent in the State of Georgia? (use a separate sheet of paper if needed). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is this Nominee a member of any civic organization or clubs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Nominee must be in good standing with AFPAG and their local agency. All applications must be Received by February 1, 2019. The winner will be selected by AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must be present at the awards luncheon. Please mail your application to: AFPAG Conference 101 Windsor Road, Savannah, Georgia 31419**

**2019 Caseworker of the Year Application**

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

**References for Verification**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What makes this person the BEST caseworker in Georgia? (Please use a separate sheet of paper if needed.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the nominee a member of any civic organization or club? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**All applications must be received by February 1, 2019. The winner will be selected by the AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must attend the awards luncheon. Please Mail Application to. AFPAG Conference 101 Winder Road, Savannah, Ga.31419**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2019 Association of Excellence Award Application**

Name of Association \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

**References for Verification**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**What makes this local association the best in Georgia? Us a separate sheet of paper if needed.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**All applications must be received by February 1, 2019. The winner will be selected by the AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must have a representative present at the awards luncheon. Please mail application to:  
AFPAG Conference  
101 Windsor Road Savannah, Georgia 31419**

---

# **Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia**

## **Winnie Levinson Scholarship Application**

### **THE ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA WILL AWARD TWO \$1,000.00 SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Winnie Levinson Scholarship is awarded to deserving students who are Georgia residents and are in foster care. PARENTS MUST BE A MEMBER OF the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia. (AFPAG) The Winnie Levinson Scholarship is sent directly to the student to use for any educational purpose the student may encounter. It is payable in two payments, one at the start of the fall semester, and one at the start of the spring semester. Proof of enrollment is required before payment can be issued.

The applicant need not attend a traditional school. Attending a Technical School, Business School or a Post - Secondary School would also qualify for the scholarship. We encourage all that qualify to apply. The following is a list of all the information we need to process the application.

- **Personal Data- name, address, contact information including e-mail**
- **Recommendations from three people who do not reside with you and have known you for minimum of one year, and one recommendation from your local DFCS on their letterhead.**
- **A short (500 word) essay on why you should receive this scholarship.**
- **A copy of your transcript of your high school grades.**
- **A letter from one of your parents stating why you should receive this scholarship.**

**All applications must be received by February 1, 2019  
You can apply by mailing the above information to:**

**AFPAG  
101 Windsor Road  
Savannah, Georgia 31419**

**Workshop Description Session A**  
**Friday February 22, 2019**  
**10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.**

**A-1. BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP PARENTING:** This workshop will focus on the need to change our culture in working with birth parents to be successful with reunification and how foster parents mentoring of birth parents can strengthen the reunification process. It begins with understanding all families are unique. When everyone on the team is working towards the same goal of preserving and rebuilding the family for the long-term welfare of the child, relationships are strengthened, and permanency can be achieved. **Presenters: Samantha Walker and Kemberly Watkins**

**A-2. ADHD: WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE:** This workshop will focus on finding a common ground through understanding our differences. Presenters will share from their own experiences of living in a mixed household of what has worked and what has not worked so well. The goal of this workshop is to provide insight into the life of ADHD while addressing the challenges of parenting ADHD children. **Presenter: Jen and Chris Cannington**

**A-3. EARLY DETECTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY AND DISABILITIES:** The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, is leading a training initiative for educating parents on the early signs of developmental delays, disabilities and chronic health conditions in children 0-5 years. In this workshop, you will improve your knowledge and awareness of developmental delays to better identify signs of concerns and how to connect appropriate screenings and interventions. A review of the most common developmental disabilities and a developmental milestone tracker for caregivers will be included in this presentation: **Presenter: Rita Young**

**A-4. NUTS AND BOLTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:** The federal regulations for IDEIA 2004 includes a section called Procedural Safeguards. These safeguards are designed to protect the rights of parents and their child with a disability and, at the same time, give families and school systems several mechanisms by which to resolve their disputes. Understanding the IDEIA Procedural Safeguard is especially important to the parent of the student with a disability. This session will provide a review in layman's terms the meaning of your parental rights so that you may effectively collaborate with your child's school to ensure compliance and increase student academic and behavioral success. **Presenter: Kimberly Gore**

**A-5. A HEALTHY FAMILY MAKES A STRONG FAMILY:** When we think of family, we think of a unit. When we think of being a strong family, we think of endurance. It's not an easy task to be strong without being healthy. This workshop will provide parental skills and techniques for parents to practice at home to maintain a healthy mind, body and soul. **Presenter: Debra Suzette Brown**

**A-6. THE PATH TO PERMANENCE & THE PURSUIT OF THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD:** Every child needs and deserves a family. Not just a family in which to grow and develop, but a family to leave when the time is right, a family to come home to when the need demands, and a family to be a part of when childhood is only a distant memory. How do CASA Advocates and Guardians Ad Litem formulate their permanency recommendation? This workshop examines the factors outlined in the Ga Code that the court must consider in determining the best permanency option for a child. **Presenter: Deidre Hollands**

**A-7. LET'S TALK ADOPTION:** Whether you are a prospective adoptive parent, a resource parent, or a partnership parent, you want to attend this workshop if you have children placed in your home who you

desire to adopt. Participants attending this workshop will gain knowledge regarding the requirements and the process to adopt children from Georgia's child welfare system. The primary focus will be on laws governing adoption policy in Georgia and Georgia's best practice supported by adoption policy.

**Presenter: Deborah Burrus**

**A-8. HOW NEED DEPRIVATION IMPACTS ONGOING BEHAVIOR:** Mr. Blough, a 30 year veteran foster parent and pastor, shares insight and experience in dealing with children who've experienced need deprivation. Framed around Maslow's Hierarchy of need, this workshop is a mixture of personal stories and practical application on how kids who experience trauma can get stuck in lower stages of need even AFTER those needs have been met. Mr. Blough will give examples of discussion and will include food hoarding, night terror, and trust and aggression issues, to name a few. **Presenter: Paul Blough**

**A-9. GEORGIA'S FOSTER PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS:** This workshop is an open discussion on the Georgia Foster Parents Bill of Rights and its strengths and awareness. Participants will receive vital information on Georgia's Foster Parents Bill of Rights and contact information for your Regional Advocate. This presentation will also include the grievance procedure for both DFCS and Private Agency caregivers. Handouts will include a copy of the Foster Parents Bill of Rights and the grievance procedure. **Presenter: Cassandra Favors**

**Workshops Description Session B**  
**Friday February 22, 2019**  
**3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m**

**B-1. NATIONAL FOSTER PARENTS CODE OF ETHICS and ADVOCACY TO STRENGTHEN FAMILY POLICIES**

& **PRACTICES:** Did you know there is a National Foster Parent Code of Ethics? That's ok. You are not alone. This workshop will not only provide the history relevant to the development of the code of ethics and how the national foster parent association is working to bring the code of ethics to each state and their foster families. This workshop will also explain the advocacy approach that is being taken by the Louisiana Foster Adoptive Parent Association to ensure all newly licensed foster families as well as all tenured foster families receive a copy of the code of ethics and implements a system to ensure this continues for many years. It is time for foster parents to be recognized and respected. **Presenter: Irene Clements**

**B-2. OUR WORK, THEIR RIGHTS: SUPPORTING YOUTH THROUGH THE STUDENT DISCIPLINARY**

**PROCESS:** This workshop provides an overview of the student disciplinary process along with identifying the types of student disciplinary approaches and actions that may be provided. It will discuss information on the role of the student's case manager and other youth supporters throughout the student disciplinary process. It will also identify how prevention, intervention and support can be key tools in ensuring support for our youth in care who may experience or have experience in the student disciplinary process within their respective school system. **Presenters: Robin Brooks and Leia Williams**

**B-3. THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING SIBLING CONNECTIONS:** This workshop will help caregivers understand the need for siblings to be together. Participants will learn the long-term impact of sibling connections and what happens when those bonds are severed. Participants will learn ways to partner with the Division, relatives, and other caregivers to maintain healthy and solid relationships of siblings in their care. **Presenters: Deborah Burrus and Candis Jones**

**B-4. CASE LAW UPDATES FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CHILDREN:** Come to this workshop to hear and learn the recent appellate laws in Georgia and even nationally that might impact you, your child and even your case. This workshop will be structured as a lecture with plenty of room for discussion. **Presenter: The Honorable Judge William Bartles**

**B-5. POST ADOPTION SERVICES THROUGH ADOPTION ASSISTANCE:** Meeting a child's needs does not simply end after an adoption finalization court hearing. There comes a time when families may require post adoption services to assist with their needs long after an adoption has finalized. Families need support services to help with the demands of parenting special needs children. This workshop will focus on the post adoption services offered through the Adoption Assistance program in Georgia. Topics will include coverage on all available post adoption services. In addition to Post Adoption Services through DFCS. **Presenters: Frank Twitty and Leah Waters**

**B-6. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING YOUTH IN CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Participants attending this workshop will learn the strategies that have proven effective in the field of youth employment by DHS and gain knowledge on the difference between working with the general population of youth versus foster youth and gain an understanding about employment trends and opportunities for youth in the state of Georgia. **Presenter: Dhakiyya Waterman**



**B-7. KNOWING YOUR CAPACITY: FINDING YOUR OWN SUPERPOWERS!** Do you have what it takes to care for toddlers or are you better with teenagers? Are you uncomfortable with children who have sexual abuse history? Are you structured and disciplined or are you laid back and casual? Not all families are created equally; we all come with different strengths, experiences and values that impact our parenting styles. This workshop will give you the chance to look at your own style and sort out your superpower! You will learn ways to build your strength and break through barriers in foster care and in adoptions. This workshop will give you the right questions to ask yourself and the DFCS worker and help you relate to children in your home in a completely different way! **Presenter: Evangel D. Wicks**

**B-8. CREATIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** Whether it's with other foster parents, DFCS, the court, or other involved parties, there are going to be disagreements on what is in the best interest of the children we care for. In this workshop, participants will learn techniques and resources you can use to lessen the negative impact of those conflicts and make sure that your position is clearly heard. **Presenter: Paul Blough**

**B-9. IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A THING GO RIGHT/ COLLABRATION WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL:**

Are you eager to go beyond participating in your child's education to engaging in your child's education? If so, then this workshop is for you! Learning strategies to engage positively with your child's school administrative team and special education teacher is exciting and has proven to increase the success of the child; specifically, a child with disability. For ensuring a compliant implementation of the IEP- your school needs your help! Come and join me in learning best practice behavior and academic strategies to help your child achieve success in school and home. We all know- IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A THING GO RIGHT! **Presenter: Kimberly Gore**

**Workshop Description C**  
**Saturday February 23, 2019**  
**9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.**

**C-1. EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE:** Children in foster care consistently experience some of the lowest educational outcome of all youth. Research demonstrates that every time a child changes schools, he or she lose up to six months of his/her education. Many foster youths may change schools 10-15 times throughout his/her education. Furthermore, many foster children suffer from the emotional ramifications of the incidents that led to their placement in foster care, and this can lead to acting out and avoidance of school. Come learn how you can be a good educational advocate for your foster or adoptive child. **Presenter: Craig Goodmark**

**C-2. WELL BEING ACADEMY: “EPACP & WPAC: FOSTER THE WELLBEING OF THE WHOLE CHILD:** This workshop is designed to increase participants knowledge regarding educational wellness and advocacy for youth in foster care and includes discussion regarding compliance with federal mandates for meeting educational needs, navigating the special education process, and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to support the educational stability of foster children. Wellbeing topics will include federal mandate; Medical Dental & Developmental Needs: Psychological and mental health needs of the youth in care, tracking and monitoring wellbeing needs of foster youth. At the end of this training, participants will be better prepared to effectively advocate for the education and wellbeing needs of foster youth. **Presenters: Shemika Harris and Carmen Callaway**

**C-3. COMPLEX TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH TO CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE:** The term complex trauma describes the dual problem of children’s exposure to multiple traumatic events and the impact of the exposure on immediate and long-term outcomes. Typically, complex trauma exposure results when a child is abused or neglected, but it can also be caused by other kinds of events such as witnessing domestic violence, ethnic cleansing, or war. Many children involved in the child welfare system have experienced complex trauma. In this workshop, you will learn about the current science and how the child welfare system is shifting in response to this new information and how it can impact your foster or adoptive child. **Presenters: Michelle Barclay and Judge Michael Key**

**C-4. DIVERSITY IN SKIN AND HAIR CARE:** This workshop focuses on exploring hair texture and skincare. All participants will learn the following: 1. Understand hair and skin types 2. Understand common contraindications as it relates to a specific group 3. Understand common hair care needs (tools and supplies). 4. Understand the process of shampooing and detangling. The presenter will provide a list of resources and products available. A mini-demo will be provided. **Presenter: Kimberly Cutter-Williams**

**C-5. DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT:** The most important property of humankind is the capacity to form and maintain relationships. These relationships are necessary for any of us to survive, learn, work, and love. Human relationships take many forms but the most intense, most pleasurable and most painful are those relationships with family, friends and love ones. Within this inner circle of intimate relationships, we are bonded to each other with an “emotional glue” bond with love. This interactive workshop focuses on the importance of developing emotional attachments with children in

care. Participants will gain understanding of the use of techniques such as soothing and comfort to help a child find security and safety within relationships. **Presenter: Brenda Gillespie**

**C-6. UNDERSTANDING AMERIGROUP'S 360:** This workshop will provide the participants with the information and tools they will need to secure healthcare needs for their children. Georgia's Child Welfare System underwent a major change. The Amerigroup representative will give you all the key informational updates and facts on this program. Participants will be able to interact with the presenter by asking questions and sharing their opinions. **Presenter: Ronald Dunham**

**C-7. PREVENTING ADOPTION DISRUPTIONS: HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND COPE WITH TRAUMA ISSUES AND YOUR ADOPTIVE CHILD:** Adoptive children are routinely told that when they are adopted, they have found their forever families. Yet increasingly, adoptive parents are taking their children to DFCS and saying that they cannot continue to parent their children. This situation re-traumatizes children who have already been traumatized by parental abuse and neglect and by years in the foster care system. We will focus on how to prevent the disruption of an adoptive placement. **Presenters: Bonnie Lockwood and Kristi Lovelace**

**C-8. CULTURAL BIAS AWARENESS FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES:** This workshop will focus on transracial and cross-cultural issues in transracial placements. Adoptive parents will learn new approaches, frameworks, tools and competencies to strengthen their skills for parenting children who are of a different race, nationality or culture than that of the adoptive parent. **Presenter: Robert O'Connor**

**C-9. ADHD: WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE:** This workshop will focus on finding a common ground through understanding our differences. Presenters will share from their own experiences of living in a mixed household of what has worked and what has not worked so well. The goal of this workshop is to provide insight into the life of ADHD while addressing the challenges of parenting ADHD children. **Presenter: Jen and Chris Cannington**

**Workshop Description D**  
**Saturday February 23, 2019**  
**1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.**

**D-1. BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP PARENTING**

Looking beyond Partnership Parenting to determine how foster parents can support reunification. We must change our culture to truly mentor birth parents to strengthen the reunification process. It begins with understanding all families are unique. When everyone on the team is working towards the same goal of preserving and rebuilding the family for the long-term welfare of the child, relationships are strengthened, and permanency can be achieved. **Presenters: Samantha Walker and Kemberly Watkins**

**D-2. NATIONAL FOSTER PARENTS CODE OF ETHICS and ADVOCACY TO STRENGTHEN FAMILY POLICIES**

& **PRACTICES:** Did you know there is a National Foster Parent Code of Ethics? That's ok. You are not alone. This workshop will not only provide the history relevant to the development of the code of ethics and how the national foster parent association is working to bring the code of ethics to each state and their foster families. This workshop will also explain the advocacy approach that is being taken by the Louisiana Foster Adoptive Parent Association to ensure all newly licensed foster families as well as all tenured foster families receive a copy of the code of ethics and implements a system to ensure this continues for many years. It is time for foster parents to be recognized and respected. **Presenter: Irene Clements**

**D-3. THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM: THE PIPELINE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. It has occurred in all 50 states. and foster children are particularly vulnerable. This workshop will increase your knowledge on what human trafficking is. Participants will learn tactics often used by traffickers to lure victims. Participants will also learn strategies to help keep children from becoming victims. **Presenter: Karen Lambie**

**D-4. THE PATH TO PERMANENCE & THE PURSUIT OF THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD:** Every child needs and deserves a family. Not just a family in which to grow and develop, but a family to leave when the time is right, a family to come home when the need demands, and a family to be a part of when childhood is only a distant memory. How do CASA Advocates and Guardians Ad Litem formulate their permanency recommendation? This workshop examines the factors outlined in the Ga Code that the court must consider in determining the best permanency option for a child. **Presenter: Deidre Hollands**

**D-5. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING YOUTH IN CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Participants attending this workshop will learn the strategies that have proven effective in the field of youth employment by DHS and gain knowledge on the difference between working with the general population of youth versus foster youth and gain an understanding about employment trends and opportunities for youth in the state of Georgia. **Presenter: Dhakiyya Waterman**

**D-6. KNOWING YOUR CAPACITY: FINDING YOUR OWN SUPERPOWERS!** Not all families are created equally; we all come with different strengths, experiences and values that impact our parenting styles. This workshop will give you the chance to look at your own style and sort out your superpower! You will learn ways to build your strength and break through barriers in foster care and in adoptions. This

workshop will give you the right questions to ask yourself and the DFCS worker and help you relate to children in your home in a completely different way! **Presenter: Evangel D. Wicks**

**D-7. FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME:** Attendees will learn what Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is all about. FAS is a group of signs and symptoms that appear together and indicate a certain condition. The signs and symptoms are birth defects that results from a women's use of alcohol during her pregnancy. Participants will learn the signs, symptoms, and where to get help from. **Presenter: Marjorie Jones**

**D-8. A HEALTHY FAMILY MAKES A STRONG FAMILY:** When we think of family, we think of a unit. When we think of being a strong family, we think of endurance. It's not an easy task to be strong without being healthy. This workshop will provide parental skills and techniques for parents to practice at home to maintain a healthy mind, body and soul. **Presenter: Debra Suzette Brown**

**D-9. EARLY DETECTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS AND DISABILITIES:** The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, is leading a training initiative for educating parents on the early signs of developmental delays, disabilities and chronic health conditions in children 0-5 years. In this workshop, you will improve your knowledge and awareness of developmental delays to better identify signs of concerns and how to connect appropriate screenings and interventions. A review of the most common developmental disabilities and a developmental milestone tracker for caregivers will be included in this presentation: **Presenter: Rita Young**

## Speaker's Biographies

**Barclay, Michelle, Esquire:** Michelle Barclay has been on staff to the Supreme Court of Georgia's Commission on Justice for Children since 1996. Before becoming a lawyer, she was a nurse, specializing in ICU and Trauma Care at both Grady and Emory Hospitals. Her degree includes a Juris Doctor from Emory University School of Law. She is also co-founder (along with her husband Andrew Barclay) of the Barton Child Law and Policy Center at Emory University.

**Bartles, William, Judge:** The Honorable Judge William Bartles is the Juvenile Court Judge in Henry County. He received his Law Degree from the University of Georgia. During his tenure as Juvenile Court Judge, he has partnered with the Division of Family and Children Services to ensure the highest quality of services to children and families by the Division. Additionally, Judge Bartles frequently shares his vast knowledge with judges, foster and adoptive parents, and child welfare professionals throughout the country as a national speaker on child welfare topics.

**Blough, Paul:** Mr. Blough is CEO and founder of Blough Tech, a nationally recognized IT Service Company focused on helping small businesses solve their problems through technology. Mr. Blough and his wife Kim are 25 year plus veteran foster parents, have had over 110 plus children in their home and have adopted 6. They are actively involved in trying to break the cycle that leads of many foster children to repeat the mistakes of their birth parents. Mr. Blough also serves on the board of directors for both the local and state foster parent association.

**Brooks, Robin:** Robin Brooks worked as a teacher in the public-school system where she began tutoring youth in foster care, she has worked as an Education Support Monitor with the Division for five years before being promoted to District Education Manager for the North District. She and her team advocate for the educational well-being of the youth in foster care. Ms. Brooks currently holds a Bachelor's degree in Education and a Master's degree in Mathematics.

**Brown, Suzette:** Mrs. Brown has an Associate Degree in Business Management and a B.A. in Psychology. She has been employed with Families First- Georgia Center for Support over five years. Mrs. Brown is married. They are raising their eight-year-old granddaughter.

**Bruce, Jerry, Esquire:** Jerry Bruce has been a parent, Guardian-Ad Litem, Delinquency and Adult Prosecutor, Delinquency and Adult Defender, Special Assistance Attorney General representing Georgia's Division of Family and Children and has served as a Juvenile Court Judge; essentially every job an attorney can do in Georgia's Juvenile Court. He is currently involved in Child Welfare Law and Policy work for state agencies, educational institutions, and he regularly presents and trains on child welfare issues.

**Burrus, Deborah:** Ms. Burrus is the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services State Adoption Director. Ms. Burrus has worked passionately in the field of child welfare since 1992. Most of Ms. Burrus tenure has been spent working in the area of adoptions. Currently as the Adoption Director, she is responsible for leading her team's efforts to achieve timely and safe permanency outcomes for children in foster care. Ms. Burrus is a current member of the National Adoption Exchange Association Executive Board and has previously served on the National Foster Care Manager's Board and is a proud graduate of Auburn University.

**Callaway, Carmen.** Ms. Callaway is the Director of Community Programs within the Division and oversees programs that provide education and youth development services to foster youth and youth who are within economically disadvantaged communities. Ms. Callaway also has been one of the leaders in ensuring resources are available for youth service organization through partnership with other state agencies and stakeholders. Ms. Callaway received her Master of Science Degree in Education Research from Georgia State University in Atlanta Ga, and a Bachelor's degree in Human Development from Howard University in Washington D.C.

**Cannington, Chris and Jen:** The Canningtons were foster parents and now they are adoptive parents of two ADHD children. Mr. Cannington has used his personal insight with living with this line of illness as he has struggled with it himself. Mr. Cannington has used his personal experience to help children cope and understand ADHD from the inside out. Mrs. Cannington is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has worked in Mental Health with both Adult and Children and Adolescent Population, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

**Clements, Irene:** Mrs. Clements and her husband have foster for 27 years and have adopted four children during that time. Mrs. Clements has served as an advocate within the child protection system for over forty-three years. Mrs. Clements is currently the Executive Director of the National Foster Parent Association and provides services and advocacy on foster care and adoption related issues through her consulting business. She also serves as the Public Policy Chair for the Texas Foster Family

Association; the chair of Every Child Inc. Board of Directors, serves on the Texas Children Justice Act Taskforce and many other organizations.

**Cutter-Williams, Kimberly:** Mrs. Cutter-Williams has been a fulltime hair stylist for over 20 years and a licensed cosmetology teacher for 15 years. Mrs. Cutter-Williams holds a Cosmetology License from Savannah Technical College, Teachers License from Poway Beauty College, A Bachelor's in Psychology from Saint Leo University, and her Master's in Education from Armstrong Atlantic University. She is currently employed as the Department Chair at Savannah Technical College. Mrs. Cutter-Williams is a State Certified Mediator. She is married and enjoys spending time with her family, husband Richard, sons Stephen and Stephan, daughter Kimberlin and her two granddaughters Khloe and Zoe.

**Favors, Cassandra:** Ms. Favors has been serving as a member of AFPAG since 2004 and currently holds the position of Vice President. Ms. Favors has been a foster parent since 1999 and has adopted three children and fostered over 80 children. Ms. Favors has been active in working closely with the Department of Family and Children Services and instrumental in influencing federal policies for children in foster care. Ms., Favors also serves as President of the Spalding County Foster & Adoptive Parents Association Inc since 2006

**Gillespie, Brenda LMSW:** Mrs. Gillespie is the Program Manager for the Georgia Center for Resource and Support. She is an LMSW, having graduated from the University of Georgia, School of Social Work. She retired from DFCS in 2004. She leads the development of IMPACT, a continuum of services for prospective foster and adoptive families. She was a consultant for EMBRACE (the Foster Families Foundation of Georgia, Inc.)

**Gore, Kimberly:** Dr. Kimberly Gore is currently with the Brighter Day Education Consulting, which provides services that supports local school districts to provide general supervision for special education and related services to students with disabilities. As the former Director of Special Education and Special Education Program Specialist for Georgia Department of Education Compliance Unit, she has gained extensive experience.

**Harris, Shemika; LMSW:** Shemika Harris has been professionally involved in child welfare for over 15 years. She received her Bachelor of Social Work from Barton College in North Carolina and Master of Social Work from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. Shemika Harris has experience in training case managers, supervisors, foster parents, child placement agencies, and child care institutions in child welfare policies. Presently, she serves as the program manager for the Wellness Programming Assessment and Consultation unit (WPAC).

**Jones, Candis:** Mrs. Jones begin her career with the State of Georgia in 1997 in the Department of Corrections. In 2002, she transitioned to the Division of Family and Children Services. She has served in several positions with the Division, from the Office of Family independence to the Office of Child Welfare. She also has served as Director of Thomas County DFCS. In 2015, she became the Director of the Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit in where she has been working feverishly to develop a strong and supportive network for Georgia's caregivers and children.

**Jones, Marjorie, LPN:** Mrs. Jones is a Certified Nurse's Assistant. She was employed for eight years at Memorial Mission Hospital in Ashville North Carolina. Mrs. Jones served 5 years in the U.S. Army as an administrative assistant. She was station at Fort Carson, Colorado and in Germany. After her tour of duty was over, she and her husband lived in Fort Hood, Texas for 28 years. During that time, she furthered



her education by obtaining a Nurse License at Temple Jo. College and at the University of Texas. Mrs. Jones is a foster parent and serves on the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia's Board of Directors.

**Key, Michael, Judge:** The Honorable Judge Michael Key has served in the Juvenile Court in Troup County, Georgia since 1989. He is a partner in the law firm of Key and Grady, P.C. A graduate of Emory University School of Law, Judge Key served in the U.S. Airforce from 1971-1975. Judge Key is the past president of the Juvenile Judges. He is a member of the Georgia Child Support Guide Line Commission and served as chair of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

**Lambie, Karen:** Now retired, Dr. Lambie taught for a total of 32 years at both Elementary and University level. She has a PHD in Educational Psychology from the University of Georgia. Before retiring in 2010, she made the decision to dedicate the rest of her life to work social change and raise awareness concerning human rights violations. She serves on the Board of Director for Savannah Working against Human Trafficking. Dr. Lambie is a foster Parent from Bulloch County. Also Dr. Lambie serves on the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia.

**Lockwood, Bonnie:** Mrs. Lockwood has a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from Georgia State University. She has been a Licensed Professional Counselor in Georgia since 1997. Mrs. Lockwood has studied and worked with attachment disorders for several years. She also specializes in addiction and child welfare. Mrs. Lockwood is married and has two teenage girls.

**Lovelace, Kristi:** Ms. Lovelace practices law in Central Georgia. She is certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist by the National Association of Counsel for Children, represents parents and children, and worked as a Municipal Court Judge.

**O'Connor, Robert:** Mr. O'Connor MSW., LGSW, has been leading transracial adoption training sessions and training engagement for more than 20 years. He is a highly sought-after child welfare and diversity consultant serving county, state, federal, for non-profit entities. Robert O'Connor is an adult transracial adoptee of African-American decent. He and his older brother experienced multiple failed adoption and foster care prior to being transracially adopted at the age of four. He grew up as part of one of the first generation of transracial adoptive families. He has used his life experience to move from state ward to state ward administrator, from special education to college professor, and from cultural isolation to practice innovation. His is a story of perseverance, power, and promise. Mr. O'Connor was raised in a racially diverse family in the Twin City area of Minnesota. He is the founder of Robert O'Connor and Associates which specializes in cultural diversity and inclusion training. Cultural competency and bias awareness training, transracial adoption training in a variety of setting. He is also an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Metropolitan University of Minnesota.

**Twitty, Frank:** Mr. Frank Twitty has been employed with DFCS for more than 21 years, beginning in Hall County as a foster care and resource development worker. In 2003, he began working in the State Treatment Services Unit, monitoring private child placing agencies and assisting with the placement needs of children with special needs. In 2008, he joined the Social Services Administration Unit (SSAU) where he is currently serving as Program Manager. The common thread that has run through his career is a desire to advocate for the needs of children and the people who care for them.

**Walker, Samantha:** Samantha N. Walker is the State Reunification Manager for the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. She has over twelve years' experience in child welfare, having worked in the areas of child protection, foster care, kinship care, and adoptions. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of New Orleans and a Master of Social Work degree from Southern University of New Orleans.

**Waterman, Dhakiyya:** Dhakiyya Waterman builds successful programs that support youth and young adults using her service-based knowledge and professionally advanced skill set. Throughout her professional career, she has worked in several capacities related to youth development, most significantly to foster youth in Georgia. She is passionate about building stronger communities by working with the opportunity youth population and has spent the last five years with the Department of Human Services working to ensure that the foster care population are ready for employment opportunity.

**Watkins, Kemberly:** Ms. Kemberly Watkins has been with the Department of Family and Children Services for 18 years. She began her career in foster care, adoptions, and resource development. Currently, she serves as the Caregiver Ombudsman for the Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit. This role is dedicated to advocating for all caregivers and working to resolve all Level II foster parent grievances.

**Waters, Leah:** Ms. Waters has been in DFCS for over 17 years, she currently serves as an adoption consultant in the Social Services Administration Unit (SSAU) where she is responsible for processing IV-E Adoption Assistance application. In her role, Ms. Waters also assists with policy consultation, special needs determinations, and approvals of Special Services Adoption Assistance requests. Mrs. Waters has a Bachelor of Social Work Degree from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. She is currently pursuing her Master of Social Work through University of Georgia.

**Wicks, Evangel D:** Mrs. Wicks has more than 24 years of child welfare experience with the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. She previously served as a case manager, RD trainer and assessor, supervisor and an administrator. Mrs. Wicks serves as an Adoption Program Consultant for the State Adoption Unit and is a member of the Exchange Team facilitating healthy adoption matches for Georgia's waiting children.

**Williams, Leia:** Ms. Williams is the District Education Manger within the Educational Programming Assessment and Consultation (EPAC) Services program within the Division, she brings extensive child welfare knowledge that enhances educational advocacy and improve educational outcome for all children in the custody and oversight of Georgia's child welfare system. She leads a team responsible for ensuring educational stability and academic support services for children in foster care. Ms. Williams is a graduate of Marshall University and received her Master of Science Degree in administration from Central Michigan University.

**Young, Rita:** Ms. Young is a private consultant, who specializes in training, project management and stake holder engagement. Her professional goal is to support the private and public sector with the latest information, programming and product to create efficiencies and foster innovation in serving and supporting individual with disabilities. As an experienced coach and facilitator, Ms. Young formerly directed partners in policy making, a well-recognized leadership for families and individual with

disabilities. Ms. Young also directed a justice training program. As a public policy director, she worked with Georgia Assembly to advocate for funding home and community base service.